

Mr. LaMantia has contributed to the community of south Texas as a savvy businessman and plays an active role in many nonprofit organizations to benefit students and education. He is recognized as the Laredo Business Person of the Year at the Distinguished Business Awards Ceremony hosted by the Laredo Chamber of Commerce. Annually, the Laredo Chamber of Commerce awards and commemorates an individual that upholds characteristics of strong work ethic, integrity, a substantial history as an established business, growth in number of employees, and philanthropy. Mr. LaMantia's business and presence of community-orientated projects have impacted the development and growth of Laredo and south Texas.

Along with a profitable and successful business of L&F Distributors, he serves on several boards and civic organizations, such as Chairman of the Board of Laredo Medical Center, former President of the Washington's Birthday Celebration, Wholesale Beer Distributors of Texas, Mr. South Texas Selection Committee, Border Olympics, and Cola Blanca, to name a few. He has volunteered his time at Saint Augustine High School, Boys and Girls Club, and coached the Gateway Girls Softball organization.

His contributions to the area have impacted students and the education community greatly. In 1991, he formed a partnership with the Hispanic Scholarship Fund, which raised over \$5 million and awarded over 2,600 scholarships to students in south Texas over an eleven-year period. In 2003, LaMantia also helped to establish a nonprofit organization, South Texas Academic Rising Scholars (STARS), which provides scholarships to students to attend the college of their choice. STARS has raised over \$9 million and have awarded scholarships to 4,100 students from south Texas. He has also been an extremely active member of the Laredo Chamber of Commerce Cola Blanca Big Buck Contest. Mr. LaMantia also dedicates his time with his wife of 27 years, Linda and his five daughters.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to have had this time to recognize Mr. Steve LaMantia, the 2010 Laredo Business Person of the Year. He has truly impacted the business community and dedicated his time for many nonprofit organizations in south Texas and Laredo.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ELMER
LEON DAGENAIS OF ESCANABA,
MICHIGAN

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the life and achievements of Elmer Leon Dagenais of Escanaba, Michigan. Elmer was beloved by his large family, countless friends and was an Escanaba legend. He was an entrepreneur, philanthropist and an active member of the community throughout his 93 years.

Born on January 30, 1917, just blocks from where his store Elmer's County Market currently stands, Elmer was the son of John and Alexina (Benoit) Dagenais. Elmer started working for his father as a young boy, running moonshine and working at the family gas sta-

tion in Brimley. When Elmer was 17 he joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), leading to his involvement in a peace time army program with the goal of protecting the nation's natural resources. Elmer attributed his lifelong belief in hard work and respect for others to his time in the CCC.

After taking on several jobs outside the Upper Peninsula, including a year working for General Motors, Elmer returned to Escanaba and opened a grocery store. The store, still operating today, is now 100,000 square feet and is one of the largest stores in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

As a young boy Elmer attended St. Anne's School and later transferred to public school, dropping out at the seventh grade to help support his family. Last year, his family and Escanaba High School came together to present Elmer with an honorary high school diploma and, at age 92, he walked alongside his great-grandson as a graduating member of the class of 2009.

Elmer was a member of St. Anne and St. Thomas Catholic Church, the Elks, the Eagles, Knights of Columbus and the Lions Club. In addition to Elmer's County Market, Elmer's many successful business ventures included Elmer's Diner, Mel & Elmer's and Elmer's Restaurant. Over the years, Elmer was named Citizen of the Year by Escanaba Elks Lodge 354, received a Lifetime Achievement Award, the Good News Award and a Business of the Year award. From 1957 on, Elmer also purchased livestock at the U.P. State Fair from 4-H youth and sponsored local sports teams including baseball, bowling and hockey.

Elmer was not one for sitting idly by, whether at work or at home. He took special pride in keeping his lawn green and well maintained atop his John Deere tractor, was an avid bowler and a devoted Green Bay Packers Fan.

Elmer was a good friend of mine and my family and our prayers go out to his family. His spirit and enthusiasm were contagious and his commitment to his family and community was inspiring.

Madam Speaker, Elmer was a lifelong Yooper who knew the value of a hard day's work, the significance of a hand shake and the difference a smile and a helping hand can make in a person's life. A family man first and foremost, Elmer was a loving husband and proud father and grandfather, who devoted his life to improving the lives of those around him. Therefore Madam Speaker, I ask that you, and all of my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives, join me in honoring the life and accomplishments of Elmer Leon Dagenais.

TRIBUTE TO LYLE MARTIN

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Lyle Martin of Huxley, Iowa on the occasion of his retirement as the owner of Blumsters on Main in Huxley.

Lyle had been making handcrafted furniture as a hobby until he bought a building on Main Street in Huxley. Lyle bought the Blumster Flower Shop, and he decided to combine it with his furniture-making endeavor, which is

now a fixture in Huxley. Over the years, Blumsters on Main expanded and now sells a variety of items including children's books, women's jewelry, and Iowa wine. Lyle would like to see the store continue to operate after his retirement. He has enjoyed meeting and talking with his customers about the store and labels it a great experience.

I know that my colleagues in the United States Congress join me in recognizing Lyle Martin's service to the town of Huxley, and I wish him much happiness and health during his retirement.

PROTECTING GUN OWNERS IN BANKRUPTCY ACT OF 2010

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to Protecting Gun Owners in Bankruptcy Act of 2010.

This legislation, as it was drafted and brought to this floor, would exempt one firearm of any value or a combination of firearms not to exceed \$1,500 from creditors' claims during bankruptcy proceedings. That's right—this bill would allow an unlimited exemption for a single firearm. Despite claims from supporters that this bill is intended to protect firearms used primarily for personal, family, or household use, there is absolutely no reference to this requirement in the bill.

This means someone could claim an exemption for an antique firearm worth tens of thousands of dollars. In essence, Congress is incentivizing individuals to game the system by purchasing an expensive firearm prior to filing for bankruptcy. While I understand language will be added to correct this glaring loophole, this just goes to show why this bill should have been vetted first by the Judiciary Committee.

In addition, supporters of this bill claim that it is a Second Amendment issue and that it will allow individuals going through bankruptcy to continue to protect their households. While I sympathize with those facing bankruptcy, the Second Amendment protects the right to bear arms. It is not intended to protect an individual's property from legitimate claims during bankruptcy anymore than the First Amendment protects an author's novels or other works during those same proceedings.

Finally, this bill was introduced 5 days ago and has a total of 21 cosponsors. Yet, here it is on the suspension calendar—a process that is supposed to be reserved for non-controversial legislation, particularly when that legislation has evaded the normal Committee process. By contrast, the Gun Show Loophole Closing Act, a bill introduced 446 days ago and supported by 109 cosponsors, languishes in committee. Closing that loophole, which we know puts guns into the hands of criminals and the mentally ill, is something worthy of this Chamber's attention. Instead, we are spending floor time on this.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this flawed and unnecessary bill.